

May 26, 2026

Honorable Christopher Blazewski  
Speaker, Rhode Island House of Representatives

Honorable Valarie Lawson  
President, Rhode Island Senate

**Re: Support for State-Funded Rental Subsidy Program**

Dear Speaker Blazewski and President Lawson:

We, the undersigned organizations and advocates, write in strong support of critical legislation to support housing stability: **H7803 (Slater) and S2681 (Murray)**, which establish a **State-Funded Rental Subsidy Program** to help Rhode Islanders experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness access safe, stable, and affordable homes.

Rhode Island has made important progress in expanding housing supply through bonds, zoning reform, and production incentives, resulting in the construction of new and preservation of existing long-term affordable homes. Those efforts are essential. Yet for many households with the lowest incomes—including seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, and individuals exiting homelessness—new housing alone does not solve the affordability gap. Many Rhode Islanders don't earn enough to afford available rents, even in subsidized developments.

Today, Rhode Island faces a shortage of more than **23,000 rental homes affordable and available to extremely low-income households (NLIHC, 2025)**, and more than **70% of extremely low-income renters are cost-burdened (HousingWorks RI, 2025)**. The result is visible in every community: longer shelter stays, increased housing instability, and more people forced into unsafe or unsheltered situations.

**H7803 and S2681 create a practical and proven tool to address this challenge by establishing a state rental subsidy** that can be paired with housing production and resources to create deeply affordable homes. By ensuring eligible households pay no more than 30% of income toward rent, the program would help bridge the gap between extremely low household incomes and the actual cost of operating quality housing.

This legislation is important because it would:

- **Create housing pathways out of homelessness** for Rhode Islanders with the greatest needs.
- **Leverage and complement federal resources** that are limited and increasingly uncertain.

- **Support long-term housing stability** through project-based subsidies tied to specific apartments.
- **Protect public resources** by reducing costly reliance on emergency shelters, hospitals, crisis systems, and corrections.
- **Strengthen Rhode Island’s housing delivery system** by making more developments financially feasible for vulnerable populations.

Housing stability improves health, employment, educational outcomes, and community well-being. Investing in permanent housing solutions is both compassionate and fiscally responsible.

Rhode Island has shown leadership in tackling the housing shortage. **Advancing these bills out of Committee is a strategic next movement to ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors are not left behind.** We appreciate your leadership and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Amos House  
 Better Lives Rhode Island  
 Blackstone Valley Community Action Program  
 Church Community Housing Corporation  
 Community Care Alliance  
 Community Housing Land Trust of Rhode Island  
 Crossroads Rhode Island  
 Direct Action for Rights and Equality  
 Economic Progress Institute  
 Foster Forward  
 Housing Network of Rhode Island  
 Housing Opportunities Made Equitable Team  
 Housing Works RI  
 Legal Key Partnership for Health and Justice  
 NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley  
 Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL)  
 One Neighborhood Builders  
 RAMP real access motivates progress  
 Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
 Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness  
 RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty  
 Rhode Island Community Action Association  
 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT  
 Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
 Sojourner House  
 The Housing Authority of Newport  
 WARM Center, Inc.  
 Washington Square Services

Warwick Housing Authority  
 West Elmwood Housing Dev. Corp.  
 Women’s Development Corp.  
 Wood River Health

## Individuals in Support

Charlie Thomas-Davison, Warwick  
Ben Darby, Providence  
Brady Dunklee, Providence  
Jessica Kiebler, Smithfield  
Monica Teixeira de Sousa, Cranston  
Tanya Tanksley, Pawtucket  
Monica Maye, Cranston  
Bernie Beaudreau, East Providence  
Taylor Ellis, South Kingstown; RI Homeless Advocacy Project  
Lev Poplow, DARE  
Michelle Wilcox, Coventry  
Maria E. Rico  
Terri Wright, Providence; RI Homeless Advocacy Project, RI Poor People's Campaign  
Derek Bowman, Providence  
Rae McCaskill, Providence  
Katie West, Warwick  
Melina Lodge, Warwick  
Paula Hudson Providence  
Carlota Burgo  
Marisa Rodriguez  
Paul M. Dumouchel, Smithfield RI  
Larissa Paolantonio, Pawtucket RI  
Julie Trudeau Paolantonio, Charlestown, RI  
Mary Pendergast, Sisters of Mercy  
Angela Howard-McParland, Sisters of Mercy, Cranston  
Kendra Anderson, Warwick  
Rev. Sarah Reed Jay, Providence  
Stefan Cabral, Warwick  
Councilman John Goncalves, Providence  
Peter Nightingale, Kingston, RI  
Dr. Molly Richard, East Providence; University of Rhode Island  
Maryrose Mensah, Gloucester  
Jessica Mowry, Coventry  
Tracy Johnson, Warwick  
Estephany Matrille, Providence  
Christian Belden, Newport  
Stephanie Booker, CCHC, Newport  
Donald King, Providence, Rhode Island  
Stephen Ostiguy, Newport  
Thomas Lacombe, CCHC, Newport  
Scott Marcil, Cranston, RI  
Paula B. McFarland, Cranston, RI  
Melonie Perez, Cranston  
Casey Gartland, West Bay RI  
Victoria Sylvia  
Brenda Clement, Pawtucket, RI

Judy K. Jones, Newport, RI  
Bob Plain, East Greenwich

CC: Honorable Katherine Kazarian, House Majority Leader  
Honorable Frank Ciccone III, Senate Majority Leader  
Honorable Marvin Abney, Chair, House Finance Committee  
Honorable Louis DiPalma, Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
Honorable Scott Slater  
Honorable Melissa Murray, Chair, Senate Health and Human Services  
Lynne Urbani, Policy Director, Office of the Speaker  
Patricia Resende, Policy Director, Office of the Senate President